Proposed Changes to Recreational Bottom-Fishing Regulations for 2004

by DFG Staff

Changes in California's ocean sport fishing regulations for federally-designated groundfish (rockfish, lingcod, cabezon, kelp greenling, and California scorpionfish), and associated state-managed species (rock greenling, ocean whitefish and California sheephead) have been proposed by DFG for consideration by the Fish and Game Commission for the 2004 calendar year. These regulatory changes are needed to help

achieve groundfish management goals, including the rebuilding of "overfished" stocks of rockfish and lingcod, and will help achieve consistency between state regulations and federal groundfish rules for the 2004 calendar year. The federal Pacific Fishery Management Council adopted changes to groundfish rules on Sept. 12. The Commission is expected to take final action at its Dec. 3-5 meeting in Sacramento.

The proposed changes would expand the fishing season (open period) for most species, from six to ten months in the area south of 40°10' N. latitude (near Cape Mendocino). The proposed changes would also expand fishing areas in the central and southern management areas. The tables below summarize proposed and existing regulations for 2004; all proposed changes are subject to the Commission's approval.

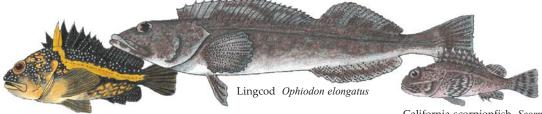
Proposed Recreational Bottom-Fishing Regulations* for 2004

Northern Management Area Ocean waters between the California-Oregon Border and 40°10' N. latitude (near Cape Mendocino)

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Species	Time Period	Depth Limit	Daily Bag Limit	Size Limit ¹		
Rockfish (except canary, cowcod, yelloweye and bocaccio rockfishes)	Open all year	no depth restrictions	10 fish in combination; see sub-limits for bocaccio, canary, and yelloweye rockfishes	see individual species below		
Canary and Yelloweye Rockfishes	CLOSED all year; NO RETENTION		NO RETENTION (zero)			
Bocaccio	Open all year	no depth restrictions	2 per person; also included in the 10-fish aggregate rockfish bag limit.	10" total length or greater		
Cabezon	Open all year	no depth restrictions	10 per person	15" total length or greater		
Kelp and Rock Greenlings	Open all year	no depth restrictions	10 kelp greenling per person; 10 rock greenling per person	12" total length or greater		
Lingcod	Open all year	no depth restrictions	2 per person	24" total length or greater		

^{*} Subject to Fish and Game Commission approval

[&]quot;Proposed Regulations" continued on page 10



China rockfish Sebastes nebulosus

California scorpionfish, Scorpaena guttata Fish sketches by Miller and Lea, 2000; Sinclair 2000

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¹ See regulations for information on gear restrictions and fillet lengths

Proposed Recreational Bottom-Fishing Regulations* for 2004-Continued

Central Management Area Ocean waters between 40°10' N. latitude (near Cape Mendocino) and 34°27' N. latitude (Point Conception) Size Limit² Time Period¹ Species Depth Limit Daily Bag Limit **RCG Complex** Open Jan, Feb, and 10 fish in combination; see see individual Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec (including all species of May-Dec sub-limits for shallow species and may only be taken in less Rockfish, Cabezon and than 180 feet (30 nearshore rockfish, groups below Greenlings as defined in Closed Mar-April cabezon, greenlings, and fathoms)3; Section 1.91, Title 14) May-Aug may only be bocaccio, cowcod, canary and yelloweye rockfishes taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)³ **Shallow Nearshore** Open Jan, Feb, and • Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec 2 fish in combination; also Rockfish (as defined in may only be taken in less included in the 10-fish May-Dec Section 1.90, Title 14; than 180 feet aggregate RCG complex includes Black-and-Closed Mar-April bag limit (30 fathoms)3; yellow, China, Grass, May-Aug may only be Gopher and Kelp taken in less than 120 feet Rockfishes) (20 fathoms)³ Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec Cabezon Open Jan, Feb, and 3 fish; also included in the 15" total length or may only be taken in less May-Dec; 10-fish aggregate RCG greater than 180 feet complex bag limit Closed Mar-April (30 fathoms)³; May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)³ Open Jan, Feb, and Kelp and Rock • Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec 2 fish in combination; also 12" total length or Greenlings May-Dec; may only be taken in less included in the 10-fish greater than 180 feet aggregate RCG complex Closed Mar-April (30 fathoms)³: bag limit May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)³ Canary, Cowcod, and CLOSED all year: NO RETENTION (zero) Yelloweye Rockfishes NO RETENTION Open Jan, Feb, and Bocaccio 1 fish: also included in the 10" total length or • Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec May-Dec; may only be taken in less 10-fish aggregate RCG greater Closed Mar-April than 180 feet complex bag limit (30 fathoms)³: May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)³ Open Jan, Feb, and Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec 24" total length or Lingcod 2 per person may only be taken in less May-Dec; greater than 180 feet Closed Mar-April (30 fathoms)³; May-Aug may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)³ California Scorpionfish Open Jan, Feb, and Jan, Feb, and Sep-Dec 10" total length or 5 per person May-Dec; may only be taken in less greater

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lingcod seasons4

Same as the rockfish and

Same as the rockfish and

10 per person

5 per person

2 See regulations for information on gear restrictions and fillet lengths

Closed Mar-April

Same as the rockfish

and lingcod seasons

Same as the rockfish

and lingcod seasons4

- 3 In the Cowcod Conservation Areas fishing is prohibited in waters greater than 120 ft (20 fathoms)
- 4 The Fish and Game Commission is considering three other options: open all year and may only be taken in less than 120 ft (20 fathoms)3; open all year and may only be taken in less than 360 ft (60 fathoms)3; open all year and no depth restrictions3

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12" total length or

Ocean Whitefish

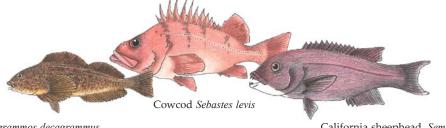
California Sheephead

Proposed Recreational Bottom-Fishing Regulations* for 2004-Continued

Southern Management Area Ocean waters between 34°27' N. latitude (Point Conception) and the U.SMexican Border						
Species	Time Period ¹	Depth Limit	Daily Bag Limit	Size Limit ²		
RCG Complex (including all species of Rockfish, Cabezon and Greenlings as defined in Section 1.91, Title 14)	Open Mar-Dec; Closed Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ³	10 fish in combination; see sub-limits for shallow nearshore rockfish, cabezon, greenlings, and bocaccio, cowcod, canary and yelloweye rockfishes	See individual species and groups below		
Shallow Nearshore Rockfish (as defined in Section 1.90, Title 14; includes Black-and- yellow, China, Grass, Gopher and Kelp Rockfishes)	Open Mar-Dec; Closed Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ³	2 fish in combination; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit			
Cabezon	Open Mar-Dec; Closed Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ³	3 fish; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	15" total length or greater		
Kelp and Rock Greenlings	Open Mar-Dec; Closed Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ³	2 fish in combination; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	12" total length or greater		
Canary, Cowcod, and Yelloweye Rockfishes	CLOSED all year; NO RETENTION		NO RETENTION (zero)			
Bocaccio	Open Mar-Dec; Closed Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ³	1 fish; also included in the 10-fish aggregate RCG complex bag limit	10" total length or greater		
Lingcod	Open Mar-Dec; Closed Jan-Feb	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ³	2 per person	24" total length or greater		
California Scorpionfish	Open Mar, April, Nov, and Dec; Closed Jan, Feb, and May-Oct	may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms) ³	5 per person	10" total length or greater		
Ocean Whitefish	Same as the rockfish and lingcod seasons ³	Same as the rockfish and lingcod fishing depths ³	10 per person			
California Sheephead	Same as the rockfish and lingcod seasons ³	Same as the rockfish and lingcod fishing depths ³	5 per person	12" total length or greater		

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- 1 Fish and Game Commission is considering a proposed exemption to closed periods for shore-based divers and anglers
- 2 See regulations for information on gear restrictions and fillet lengths
- 3 The Fish and Game Commission is considering three other options: open all year and may only be taken in less than 120 feet (20 fathoms)⁴; open all year and may only be taken in less than 360 feet (60 fathoms)⁴; open all year and no depth restrictions⁴
 4 In the Cowcod Conservation Areas fishing is prohibited in waters greater than 120 feet (20 fathoms)



Kelp greenling Hexagrammos decagrammus

California sheephead, Semicossyphus pulcher (female)

> Fish sketches by Miller and Lea, 2000; Sinclair 2000

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